

The VGP News

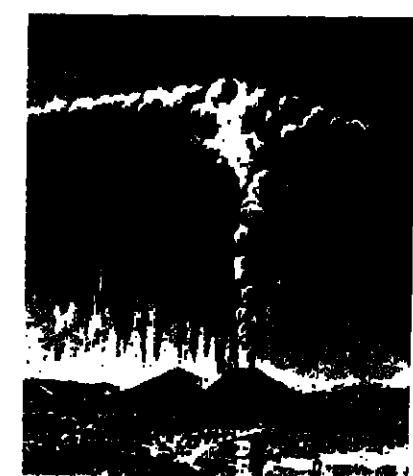


Figure 1: Three views of the river scene. Top: A view from the river looking towards the rocky structure. Middle: A view from the river looking towards the rocky structure. Bottom: A view from the river looking towards the rocky structure.

A Relation Among Geomagnetic Reversals, Seafloor Spreading Rate, Paleoclimate, and Black Shales

Err. R. Fort

The Mesozoic-Cenozoic histories of reversals in the earth's magnetic field and of periods of widespread anoxia in the ocean basins show a remarkable correlation (Figure 1; periods of black-shale deposition ("anoxic events") occur during lengthy periods without magnetic reversals ("quiet" periods). Many of published work indicates a remote connection between quiet periods and anoxic events and suggests its form: Magnetic quiet periods coincide with fast seafloor spreading. During these periods, buoyant spreading ridges displace seawater onto broad shelves, thus decreasing earth's albedo and causing global warming. Temperature gradients, and thus density gradients, from pole to equator decrease in surface waters, and the deep ocean currents of oxygenated polar waters cease. Oxygen minimum zones intensify and extend anoxic conditions throughout entire basins are indicated by black shales deposited in the deep sea. These relations thus suggest that the earth's interior processes and its climate are related and their status recorded by both magnetic polarity and anoxic event chronologies of the earth. A test of the model for the Paleozoic is proposed and some implications for mineral resources noted.

Menard et al. (1982) noted an empirical link, based on both the Jurassic and Cretaceous quiet zones, between fast seafloor spreading and stable magnetic polarity. They suggested that erupting heat plumes couple activity of the outer core and lower mantle. The relationship between magnetic polarity and spreading rate is seen at several spreading centers (Figure 1).

The link between fast spreading and transgression is well established (Hay and Pitman, 1973). Because newly generated oceanic crust cools and subsides as a function of time regardless of spreading rate, fast-spreading centers have a broad cross section (Figure 2). An increase in spreading rate thus displaces water onto continental shelves and into epicontinental seas. Cretaceous high sea levels observed in sections on cratons correspond to times of fast spreading (Hay and Pitman, 1973; Fort et al., 1977).

Calculations of the earth's albedo in the Cretaceous (with continents in their correct positions for the time) show that high sea levels and consequent larger oceans resulted in a significant albedo decrease (Barnett et al., 1980). More solar energy was absorbed. However, estimates of the magnitude of warming are not yet possible because feedback factors such as cloudiness are poorly understood. Greater atmospheric CO₂ contents due to increased volcanic activity during times of fast spreading (Hart et al., 1983) reinforced this effect. Warmer paleoclimates have long been observed from fossil assemblages and oxygen isotope measurements (Figure 1) for roughly the Aptian to Campanian (mid-Late Cretaceous) and the Middle to Late Jurassic (Douglas and Savin, 1975; Frakes, 1979; Savin, 1977).

A decrease in the surface-temperature gradients from pole to equator is also observed by these authors from these time periods, i.e., the temperature increase near the pole was greater than that near the equator. These

gradients are lower during warm periods because polar ice caps with high albedos retreat and because poleward transport of the latent heat of evaporated water increases (Mann and Wehner, 1980; Kellogg, 1979).

A link between low temperature gradients and ocean stagnation was proposed (Schlanger and Jenkyns, 1976; Fischer and Arthur, 1977) partly because of coincident timing of widespread black-shale deposition (anoxic events) and periods of equable climate. Compare the situation today with that in the Cretaceous: today's high temperature gradients (and some generation of saline waters by incongruent freezing) cause high density gradients in seawater and drive vigorous bottom currents from the poles. These currents today prevent significant ocean stratification; ocean-wide zones of strong oxygen-minimum form only where bottom currents are weak, e.g., in the North Pacific (Dana and Moore, 1980). In the Jurassic and Cretaceous, low temperature gradients must have resulted in weaker bottom currents (though probably not in weaker surface and atmospheric circulation (Barron and Washington, 1982)). Bottom waters may have been generated in sub-tropical evaporative basins (Thierstein and Berger, 1979). Strong oxygen-minimum zones became widespread. Intersections of oxygen-minimum zones with ocean floors are the sites of black shales penetrated in Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP) holes and sections now on land (Figure 2); locally, black shales formed in silled basins also (Thierstein and Berger, 1979). The timing of black-shale deposition is shown as anoxic periods on Figure 1.

Periods of widespread anoxia are of economic importance because the organic precursors of petroleum were preserved in sediments (Arthur and Schlanger, 1979). These periods also saw formation or preservation of some metal deposits (Cannon and Force, 1983; Force et al., 1983), due to strong solubility contrasts between anoxic and oxygenated water. For example, massive polymetallic sulfides that formed on ocean floors during anoxic periods have probably been selectively preserved (Figure 2).

Other authors have assembled some of the same links to form other models (e.g., Keith, 1982). The models most similar to the one in this paper is Fisher (1981) and Sheridan (1983).

Genetically related events should be similar spaced in time, and this spacing has not been shown yet across the spectrum of linkages proposed here. Mesozoic changes of spreading rate are presently documented only over time periods of about 10-30 m.y., whereas anoxic periods and their associated sea level fluctuations (third-order fluctuations of Vail et al. (1977)) occupy 3-10 m.y. (Figure 1). Currently available spreading-rate histories for the Mesozoic are very crude, however. In order to see whether linkages in spreading rate could plausibly result in observed 3-10 m.y. fluctuations, I calculated "backward" to determine a spreading-rate increase which could result in a sea level rise of 100 m in 5 m.y. Present total length of ridges (58,750 km), cylindrical ocean basins, and present areas of oceans and of land areas (0-100 m in elevation were assumed. The increase required is about 2.1 cm per year half rate for all ridges, or about 12-70% of observed average spreading rates for ridges listed by Hay and Pitman (1973) for the Cretaceous magnetic quiet interval. This rate seems possible, and therefore changes in spreading rate might indeed cause 3-10 m.y. sea-level fluctuations. The question of regression rate was not addressed. Schlanger et al. (1981) record midplate seafloor volcanism and raised seafloors from the Cretaceous; these factors (and ridge proliferation) are probably related to spreading rate changes, and potentially lessen the magnitude of increased spreading rate needed to produce transgression.

With oriented DSDP cores, testing of this hypothesis by resolving the sequence of events within single cores should be possible. Onset of anoxic bottom conditions should not precede magnetically quiet intervals (unless the model is backward!). If this hypothesis has genetic significance, it should hold regardless of when the specified conditions occurred. Periods of widespread anoxia have been proposed for the Paleozoic, from black shale sections on land alone because no intact ocean floor remains (e.g., Leggett, 1980); these sections should not contain magnetic reversals in those portions showing carbon isotope records of open-ocean anoxia. Numerous other tests of the model would see how well one factor predicts another; if results are positive, some of these tests could develop into mineral-exploration techniques (for example, a link between magnetic polarity and some sedimentary minerals).

Many of the linkages proposed here are matters of dispute or incomplete work, so errors in my depiction are likely. Nevertheless, the accord with observed features of earth history across the entire spectrum of linkages, and the similarity of the "signals" recorded by magnetic reversals and anoxic periods are indications that the general form of the hypothesis is correct. If so, a connection exists between processes in the earth's interior

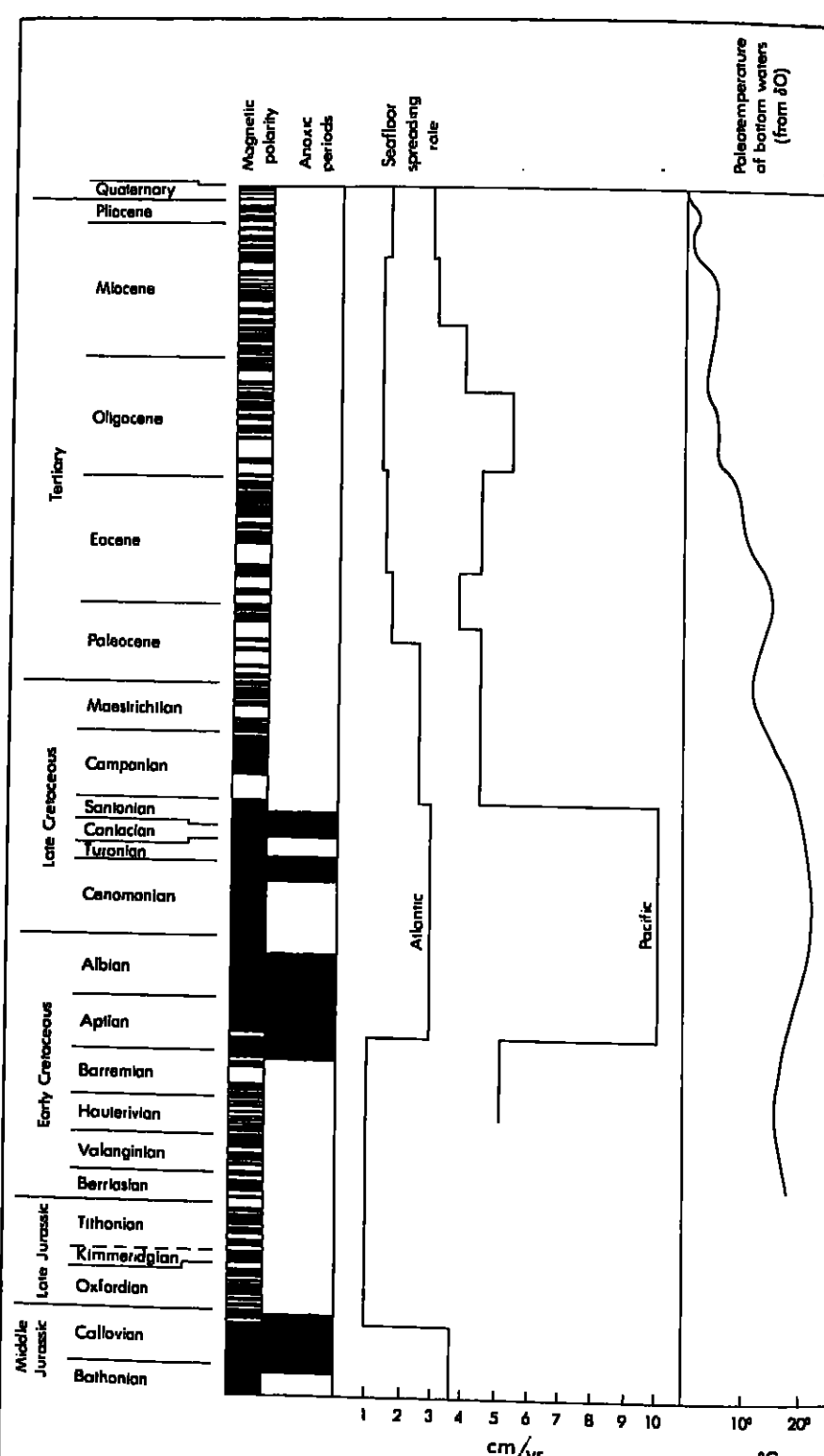


Fig. 1. Comparison of magnetic polarity time scale (Larson et al., 1982) with periods of widespread anoxia (Arthur, 1979), average half-rates of seafloor spreading (simplified from Larson and Pitman (1972); and Sheridan et al., (1982)) and oxygen isotope-derived bottom paleotemperatures from the north Pacific (Douglas and Savin, 1975). The presence of all the chronologies in a single data set (cores of the DSDP), minimizes systematic offsets, but detailed correlation is still a problem.

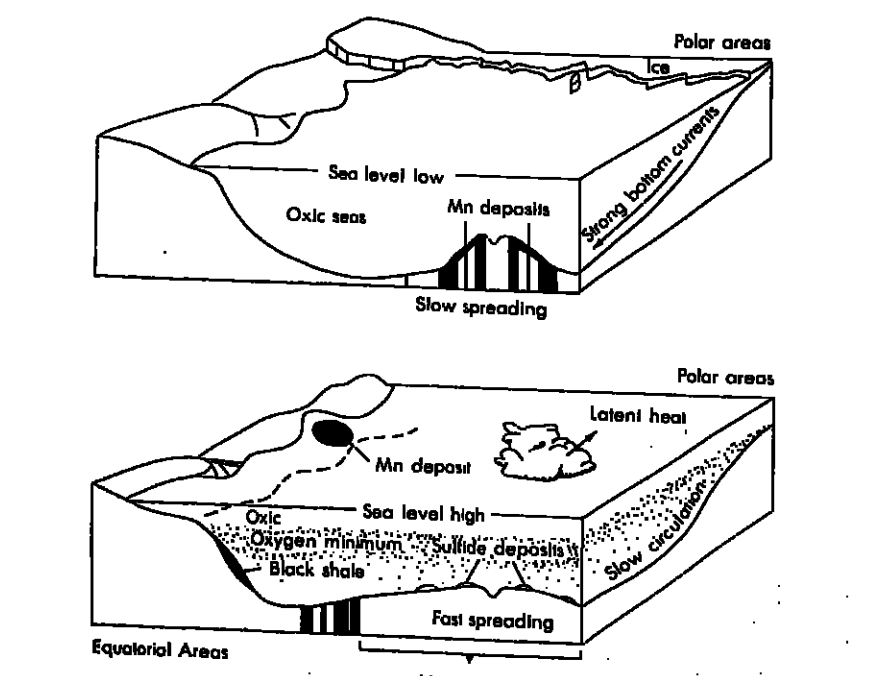


Fig. 2. Cartoon contrasting (top) state of rapid magnetic reversals, slow spreading, low sea level, cold high-gradient climate and oxic oceans (icehouse state of Fischer (1981)) and (bottom) state of magnetic quiet, fast spreading, high sea level, warm low-gradient climate and dysoxic oceans (greenhouse state). Degree of oxygen depletion proportional to stippling; oxygen minimum zones would intersect only seamounts, plateaus, and basin margins in the deeper Pacific.

which produce its magnetic field and climatic response at its face.

I am indebted to W. F. Cannon, R. P. Sheldon, Louis Nicolaisen and others for discussions on the form of linkages and to L. W. Snee and Lisa M. Pratt for help in formulating the Paleozoic test. Suggestions by participants in the 1983 Penrose conference "Cretaceous Climates" are appreciated.

References

- Arthur, M. A., Paleoclimatic events: Recognition, resolution, and reconsideration. *Rev. Geophys. Space Phys.*, 17, 1474-1494, 1979.
- Arthur, M. A., and S. O. Schlanger, Cretaceous "oceanic anoxic events" as causal factors in development of reef-reservoir oil

- ant oil fields. *Am. Assoc. Pet. Geol. Bull.*, 63, 870-885, 1979.
- Barron, E. J., J. L. Sloan II, and C. G. A. Harrison, Potential significance of land-sea distribution and surface albedo variations as a climatic forcing factor; 180 m.y. to the present. *Paleogeog., Paleoclimatol., Paleocool.*, 30, 14-40, 1980.
- Barron, E. J., and W. M. Washington, Cretaceous climate: A comparison of atmospheric simulations with the geologic record. *Paleogeog., Paleoclimatol., Paleocool.*, 40, 103-133, 1982.
- Berner, R. A., A. C. Lasaga, and R. M. Garrels, The carbonate-silicate geochemical cycle and its effect on atmospheric carbon dioxide over the last 100 million years. *Am. J. Sci.*, 283, 641-683, 1983.
- Cannon, W. F., and E. R. Force, Potential for high-grade shallow-marine manganese deposits in North America, in *Cameron Volume on Unconventional Mineral Deposits*, Am. Inst. Min. Metall. Pet. Eng., New York, pp. 175-190, 1983.
- Demaission, G. J., and G. T. Moore, Anoxic environments and oil source bed genesis. *Am. Assoc. Pet. Geol. Bull.*, 64, 1179-1209, 1980.
- Douglas, R. G., and S. M. Savin, Oxygen and

- carbon isotopic analyses of Tertiary and Cretaceous microfossils from Shatsky Rise and other sites in the North Pacific. *Initial Rep. Deep Sea Drill. Proj.*, 32, 509-520, 1975.
- Fischer, A. G., Climatic oscillations in the biosphere, in *Biotic Crises in Ecological and Evolutionary Time*, edited by M. Nitecki, p. 101-131, Academic, New York, 1981.
- Fischer, A. G., and M. A. Arthur, Secular variations in the pelagic realm in Deep-water Carbonate Environments, edited by H. E. Cook and P. Enos, Soc. Econ. Paleontol. Mineral. Spec. Pub., 25, 19-50, 1977.
- Force, E. R., W. F. Cannon, R. A. Koski, K. T. Passmore, and R. B. Doe, Influences of ocean anoxic events on manganese deposition and ophiolite-hosted sulfide preservation. *U.S. Geol. Surv. Circ.*, 822, 26-29, 1983.
- Frakes, L. A., *Climates through Geologic Time*, 30 pp., Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1979.
- Gordon, W. A., Physical controls on marine biotic distribution in the Jurassic period, in *Paleogeographic Provinces and Provinces*, Soc. Econ. Paleontol. Mineral. Spec. Pub. 21, 136-147, 1974.
- Hays, J. D., and W. C. Pitman III, Lithospheric plate motion, sea level changes, and climatic and ecological consequences. *Nature*, 246, 18-22, 1973.
- Keith, M. L., Violent volcanism, stagnant oceans, and some inferences regarding petroleum, strata-bound ores, and mass extinctions. *Geochim. Cosmochim. Acta.*, 46, 2021-2037, 1982.
- Kellogg, W. W., Influences of mankind on climate. *Annu. Rev. Earth Planet. Sci.*, 7, 63-92, 1979.
- Larson, R. L., and W. C. Pitman III, Worldwide correlation of Mesozoic magnetic anomalies, and its implications. *Geol. Soc. Am. Bull.*, 83, 3645-3662, 1972.
- Larson, R. L., X. Golovchenko, and W. C. Pitman III, Geomagnetic polarity time scale in Plate tectonic map of the circum-Pacific region. *Am. Assoc. Pet. Geol.*, 1982.
- Leggett, J. K., British Lower Paleozoic black shales and their paleo-oceanographic significance. *J. Geol. Soc. London*, 137, 129-156, 1980.
- Monabe, S., and R. T. Wetherald, On the distribution of climate change resulting from an increase in CO₂ content of the atmosphere. *J. Atmos. Sci.*, 37, 99-117, 1980.
- Savin, S. M., The history of the earth's surface temperatures during the past 100 million years. *Annu. Rev. Earth Planet. Sci.*, 5, 319-355, 1977.
- Schlanger, S. O., and H. C. Jenkyns, Cretaceous oceanic anoxic events: causes and consequences. *Geol. Mijnbouw*, 53, 179-184, 1976.
- Schlanger, S. O., H. C. Jenkyns, and I. Premoli-Silva, Volcanism and vertical tectonics in the Pacific Basin related to global Cretaceous transgressions. *Earth Planet. Sci. Lett.*, 32, 435-449, 1981.
- Sheridan, R. E., Phenomena of pulsation tectonics related to the breakup of the eastern North American continental margin. *Initial Rep. Deep Sea Drill. Proj.*, 76, 897-908, 1983.
- Sheridan, R. E., et al., Early history of the Atlantic Ocean and gas hydrates on the Blake Outer Ridge: Results of Deep Sea Drilling Project Leg 76. *Geol. Soc. Am. Bull.*, 93, 876-885, 1982.
- Thierstein, H. R., and W. H. Berger, Injection events in ocean history. *Nature*, 276, 461-466, 1979.
- Vail, P. R., R. M. Mitchum Jr., and S. Thompson III, Seismic stratigraphy and global changes of sea level, part 4: Global cycles of relative changes of sea level. *Am. Assoc. Pet. Geol. Mem.*, 26, 83-97, 1977.
- Eric R. Fort is with the U.S. Geological Survey, Reston, VA 22092.

EOS

Transactions, American Geophysical Union
The Weekly Newspaper of Geophysics

For speediest treatment of contributions send three copies of the double-spaced manuscript to one of the editors named below and one copy to AGU.

Editor-in-Chief: A. F. Spillhaus, Jr., Editors: Marcel Ackermann, Mary P. Anderson, Peter M. Bell (News), Bruce Doe, C. Stewart Gillmor (History), Clyde C. Goad, Arnold L. Gordon, Louis J. Lanzetta, Robert A. Phinney, Managing Editor: Gregg Fort, News Assistant: Tony Reichardt, Production Staff: James M. Hebl, Barbara D. Sung Kim, Patricia L. Lick, Lisa Lichtenstein, Cynthia T. McMillan.

Officers of the Union
James A. Van Allen, President; Charles L. Drake, President-Elect; Leslie H. Morfitt, General Secretary; Carl Kinsinger, Foreign Secretary; J. Tony Wilson, Past President; A. F. Spillhaus, Jr., Executive Director; Waldo E. Smith, Executive Director Emeritus.

For advertising information, contact Robin E. Little, advertising coordinator, at 202-462-4903 or toll free at 800-424-2438. Advertising must be informative and consistent with the scientific and educational goals of AGU and is subject to approval by AGU. Advertisers and their agents assume liability for all content of their advertisements and for any claims arising therefrom against the publisher. Offers in advertisements are subject to all laws and are void where prohibited.

Copyright 1984 by the American Geophysical Union. Material in this issue may be photocopied by individual scientists for research or classroom use. Permission is also granted to use short quotes and figures and tables for publication in scientific books and journals. For permission for any other use, contact the AGU Publications Office.

Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect official positions of the American Geophysical Union unless expressly stated.

Subscription price to members is included in annual dues (\$90 per year). Information on institutional subscriptions is available on request. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D. C., and at additional mailing offices. *Eos, Transactions, American Geophysical Union* (ISSN 0096-3941) is published weekly by

American Geophysical Union
2000 Florida Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Cover. Geological formation known as the Great Dike of Rhodesia extends from upper center to lower left in this photograph taken from space shuttle *Challenger* as it passed over Zimbabwe during the eighth shuttle mission, September 1983. Because of the shuttle's nighttime launch, the crew was able to photograph during daylight parts of Africa, the Amazon jungle, and the Australian desert that previous crews had seen only at night. (Photo courtesy of NASA.)

An Invitation

Would you like to be on the cover of *Eos*? If you have any illustrations with both aesthetic charm and scientific interest—photographs (preferably black and white) of geophysical phenomena, experimental results, or graphs—*Eos* would like to consider them for publication on the cover. Send the original illustration or 8 x 10 inch (20 x 25 cm) glossy photo with a short (50-200 words) explanation that can serve as a caption. You may also submit a more extensive news item or even a short article to accompany a proposed cover. Captions will be by-lined. If the material has been previously published, please supply a copyright release from the copyright owner. Send it to *Eos* Cover, AGU, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC, 20009.

MEETINGS

Water in Silicate Melts

Water is one of the more important volatile species in magmas, both in terms of its abundance and its influence on the properties of a given magma. Many workers in the geological sciences have measured, modeled, and speculated on the interaction of water with silicate melts as a function of pressure. At the same time, glass and materials scientists have collected a considerable body of data on the effect of water on the properties of liquid and glassy silicates at 1 atmosphere on "Solubility and Transport Properties of Water in Silicate Melts" was held during the 1983 AGU Spring Meeting, May 30-June 3, in Baltimore. The session had three main objectives: (1) review the present data base and discuss the status of current models in order to identify areas where further work is needed; (2) introduce interested geologists to the large body of work being carried out in the glass and materials sciences; and (3) consider glass properties such as thermodynamic relationships, structure of hydrous melts, and dynamic properties including diffusion and viscosity. This report summarizes the major topics discussed. More detailed information may be found in the published abstracts (*Eos*, May 5, 1983, pp. 338-343).

The session opened with two papers setting

the geological perspective of water solubility in magmas. J. Eichlerberger and H. Westrich discussed the observed water content and distribution in obsidian flows, where the average observed water content reflects the solubility of water in rhyolitic liquid at near 1 atmosphere pressure. They considered the effect of degassing on water distribution within observed flows, and on the water content of ejected material during explosive eruption. J. Clemens reviewed measured and estimated contents of water for a variety of andesitic to granitic rocks. He found melt-water contents between 0.7 and 7 wt % water depending on the sample and source conditions (but with a general average value near 3 wt %), and he discussed the relative merits of methods for estimating water content. J. P. Coutures and G. Urban presented a survey of solubility results obtained by glass and materials scientists for silicate glasses and liquids near 1 atmosphere. These water solubilities generally fall around 0.05-0.2 wt %, with some possible systematic as a function of composition. Discrepancies between different data sets, however, preclude any detailed correlations at present.

F. McMillan and J. Holloway summarized some water solubility measurements on synthetic and natural silicate melts at high pressures. Again, some systematic behavior with composition was noted, but the present data base is too limited to explore this fully. E. Stolper, L. Silver, and R. Aines summarized their recent infrared spectroscopic work on the speciation of water in hydrous silicate glasses and presented the results of new studies at high temperature. They found that both hydroxyl and molecular water species coexist to at least 550°C, supporting their dissolution model for water in molten silicates.

The next two papers concerned modeling of thermodynamic relations for hydrous melts. D. Egler considered the dissolution reaction of water in diopside melt, and discussed Hentrich, Hentrich analogue ($\alpha = x_2$), and non-Hentrich expressions for its activity-composition relations. A. Boettcher presented experimentally determined melting curves in the systems NaAlSi₃O₈-H₂O-CO₂ and SiO₂-H₂O-CO₂. He compared and contrasted mixing relations in the fluids and silicate liquids for these two systems. These data suggested that CO₂ is soluble in SiO₂ liquids at high pressures (greater than or equal to 15 kbar) and high water contents. Discussion which followed this general topic emphasized that useful thermodynamic descriptions for such hydrous systems need not be simply correlated with structural changes in the melt.

Four papers examined the diffusion of water in hydrous glasses and melts and the effect of water on diffusion of other species. M. Tomozawa described the importance of water in the glass sciences and then presented the results of several studies of water diffusion in silicate glasses. One interesting result was the large observed dependency of the diffusion coefficient on the stress regime in nonhydrous silicate experiments at relatively low pressure and temperature.

Two papers by K. Lapham and J. Karsten reviewed water diffusion studies in silicate melts and glasses and presented some results

AGU MEMBERS

Tell your friends, colleagues, and students about AGU. Call 800-424-2488 for membership applications.

of their recent studies on diffusion of water in obsidian. Observed variations in the diffusion coefficient with temperature and composition were summarized and current models for the "water" diffusion mechanism were discussed. Lapham noted no pressure dependence of the diffusion coefficient in her obsidian study, in contrast to that observed by M. Tomozawa. This difference may be partly due to the higher pressures and temperatures involved in the obsidian runs and perhaps the hydrostatic nature of these latter experiments.

T. M. Harrison and E. B. Watson discussed the effect of water content on the diffusion of zirconium in granitic melts. They found a large increase in diffusivity and solubility at higher water contents and discussed the effect of this on zircon dissolution kinetics in hydrous granitic magmas.

The afternoon poster session included a number of presentations directly related to the discussions in the morning.

From informal discussions before, during, and after the meeting, we feel that the following general conclusions may be drawn. First, there are relatively few published estimates for water contents of primary igneous magmas, and more solubility data are necessary for synthetic and natural compositions at both high and low pressures. Likewise, diffusion data as a function of pressure, temperature, and composition are wanted. Evidently more experiments are needed. Second, empirical modeling of thermodynamic and dynamic properties is a useful and necessary field, especially for those interested mainly in calculation of the effect of water on bulk properties. At the same time, mechanistic studies at the molecular level will lead to a better understanding of water-melt interactions at the microscopic level. More spectroscopic studies are needed on hydrous glasses, and especially on hydrous melts, at pressure and temperature. We feel that both empirical modeling and structural studies are worthwhile and should be pursued with as much interplay between the two approaches as possible.

This meeting report was prepared by Paul McMillan, who is with the Department of Chemistry, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287 and Edward Stolper, who is with the Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA 91109.

American Geophysical Union

NEW RELEASES

Geodynamics Series Volume 11
Geodynamics of the Western Pacific-Indonesian Region
edited by T. W. C. Hilde and S. Uyeda **\$38**

AGU Special Publication
A Streetcar to Subduction
and Other Plate Tectonics Trips by Public Transport in San Francisco
by C. Walcott **\$7.50**

Tectonic Map of the Rio Grande Rift and Southeastern Colorado Plateau, New Mexico, and Arizona
by W. S. Baldrige, Y. Barov and A. Kron **\$15**

BOOK AND MAP SPECIAL
above map plus
Rio Grande Rift: Tectonics and Magmatism
edited by R. E. Flecker **special combination price \$35**

Geophysical Monograph Series Volume 28
Magnetospheric Currents
edited by T. Potemra **\$33**

Water Resources Monograph Series Volume 9
Groundwater Hydrology
by J. S. Rosenzweig and G. D. Bennett **\$18**

AGU members receive a 30% discount
Write: American Geophysical Union, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009
Call: 800-424-2488
(202) 462-6903 (in DC area or outside contiguous USA)
Fax: 710-822-9300

Orders under \$50 must be prepaid
We'll Western Union
Telex: 710-822-9300

